

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-13, 15, 16, 50 and 51 remain pending in this application, with Claims 1 and 50 being independent. Claims 2, 14, 17-49 and 52-54 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1, 3, 5, 9, 12, and 15 have been amended herein to recite even more clearly the present invention.

Restriction Requirement

With respect to the restriction requirement, the Examiner identified the following two groups of claims as being directed to patentably distinct inventions:

Group I, Claims 1-37 and 40-49, drawn to a device; and

Group II, Claims 38, 39 and 50-54, drawn to a method.

Applicants submit that the embodiments are so closely related as to not require separate fields of search. A duplicative search, with possibly inconsistent results, may occur if the restriction requirement is maintained. In addition, any nominal burden placed upon the Examiner to perform a search for the overall invention is outweighed by the public interest in not having to obtain and study separate patents that may issue from Applicants' invention if the restriction requirement is maintained.

Nevertheless, in order to comply with the requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.143, Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, to prosecute the species of Group I, Claims 1-37 and 40-49, of which Claims 1, 3-13, 15 and 16 remain pending.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JJO', is written over a horizontal line.

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